

Joseph Collins House
633 Goshen Road (setback from northwest
corner of Goshen Road and Collins Drive)
West Chester Vicinity (West Goshen Township)
Chester County
Pennsylvania

HABS No. PA-1114

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PHOTOGRAPHS

HISTORICAL AND DESCRIPTIVE DATA

Historic American Buildings Survey
Heritage Conservation and Recreation Service
Department of the Interior
Washington, D.C. 20243

HISTORIC AMERICAN BUILDINGS SURVEY

HABS No. PA-11114

JOSEPH COLLINS HOUSE

Location: 633 Goshen Road (setback from northwest corner of Goshen Road and Collins Drive), West Chester Vicinity (West Goshen Township), Chester County, Pennsylvania.

Present Owner: Chester County Historical Society, 225 North High Street, West Chester, Pennsylvania.

Statement of Significance: The original house (now the south front portion) was erected in 1727 and, though small, was a place of some style with its dressed stone and jack arch over the date stone. The local historical society has acquired this property and is restoring and refurnishing it for public exhibition.

PART I. HISTORICAL INFORMATION

A. Physical History:

1. Original and subsequent owners: Joseph Collins, 1703-1735; Henry Collins, 1735-1752; Henry Collins' heirs, 1752-1772; Nathaniel Moore, 1772-1777; Joseph Moore, 1777-1798; John Bettie, 1798-1805; Jacob Right and his estate, 1805-1821; Washington Righter, 1821; Abner Hoopes, 1821-1848; Pierce Hoopes, wife Sarah and sons Josiah and Abner, 1848-1910; Hoopes Bros. and Thomas, 1910-1945; John D. Jacob, 1945-1946; Bart Anderson, 1946-1947, who made a deed of gift to the Chester County Historical Society.
2. Date of erection: 1727.
3. Architect, builder, suppliers: Unknown.
4. Original plans, construction etc.: The original house consisted of the south front, one large room with large cooking fireplace (the arch is still in the basement that supported it); the second floor had a small hall from the stairway in the northwest corner with two partitioned rooms (upright poplar boards). The attic was one large unceilinged room.
5. Alterations and additions: Henry Collins died 1752; in 1753, his widow married Nathaniel Moore who later purchased property from his wife's children by first husband, Henry. Between 1758 and 1760, the north wing was added by him. It was a stone kitchen, 20' by 23'; at the same time the huge fireplace in the 1727 section was removed and a small "parlor" sized chimney was erected on the original arch. The trim of the front of the house dates from then.

Original board partitions in the second floor were removed and plaster ones put in, making three small rooms. There is one frame from a south front window showing that originally the four south windows had had leaded sash casement windows, with small fixed sash above. This frame was found in the attic. The two windows were added in the west wall of the 1727 section at this time. The small window that had been in the north wall, giving light to the stairway, was made into a wall closet opening into the new kitchen wing. The other major change was in the stairway of the 1727 house. It had been in the northwest corner of the house; it was then changed to make the major part of it near the top. To get to the attic a rather clever plan was used. In the space over these stairs there was built a closet, one had to make a high step to get into it, then the back of the closet had a door through which one continued up to the attic over the steps from the first to the second floor. From the bedroom over the new kitchen a few steps also joined the steps in the back of the closet.

6. Important old views and references:

- a. Views: The Chester County Historical Society has a large amount of material on the house, including many photographs, but all of these are of the 20th century.
- b. References: Sources of information, to be found in the Chester County Historical Society - Classified printed and manuscript files under the heading: West Goshen Township. Lands - Collins Mansion.

B. Historical Events Connected with the Structure:

Joseph Collins purchased the land and resided on the tract from 1713. The site of the first house is not known, but it was certainly near the present 1727 house, perhaps near the spring over which the present spring house is built. Small as the original 1727 house was, it was a place of some style with its dressed stone, keystoneing over the date stone, etc. In a newspaper account of the place written in 1879 for a local paper, it is stated that it was called even then the "Collins Mansion," and this was many years after the last of the Collins owners had left the area. The Chester County Historical Society has acquired the property by a deed of gift, and in time it will be open to the public, furnished as it might have been after the 1760 rebuilding.

C. Supplemental Material:

"To be Sold at Private Sale, A First Rate Plantation, Formerly the property of Doctor Moore, containing 157 acres more or less; lying in Goshen township, Chester county, adjoining the borough of West-Chester, lands of Wm. Eachus, Abner Hoops, the Tavern tract of Jesse Matlack, now under tenure to Joseph Pearce, and others; the improvements are a good two story stone-house and stone kitchen, a good well and pump in it, at the kitchen door, a very commodious stone barn, built a few years since, an excellent Never failing spring of water with a stone House erected over it, near the barn yard, from which water is furnished to the yard and stable; two streams of water pass through the tract, which would make it answer well to be divided into two tracts, and one of the streams a Grist Mill, Paper Mill or carding works might be erected to great advantage, near the house is an excellent orchard and in the garden and contiguous to the house are choice fruit trees of Pear, plumb and Cherry, &c.- There are about 40 acres of upwards of good woodland.- The soil is of proverbial fertility producing the best crops of wheat and small grains, & for grass cannot be exceeded.

"For further particulars enquire of the subscriber upon the Premises."

JACOB RIGHTER.

Goshen township, Sept. 2d, 1812

["Chester and Delaware Federalist," West Chester, Pa. September 9, 1812.]

PART II. ARCHITECTURAL INFORMATION

A. General Statement:

1. Architectural character: The 1727 section, though small, had distinctive masonry work. The house was somewhat remodeled in 1760 and a wing added to the north.
2. Condition of fabric: Excellent.

B. Description of Exterior:

1. Over-all dimensions: 1727 section, 23' (three bay south front) x 21'-6" (one bay west side), two stories; 1760 north section 20'-4" x 23'-8", one-and-one-half stories.
2. Foundations: Stone.
3. Wall construction: Dressed serpentine stone (from a nearby quarry) on the south front, uncoursed fieldstone sides and

1760 wing. The date stone in the center of the south (front) wall between second floor windows gives initials of builders, Joseph and Maty Collins, 1727.

4. Chimneys: The front two-story section has a west end, masonry chimney at the gable ridge. The rear wing has a double masonry chimney with flat chimney caps at the end of its gable ridge.
5. Openings:
 - a. Doorways and doors: Original openings as of 1760 rebuilding. The doors are located on the south front and west sides. The south front has a six panelled wooden door. There is a three light transom above the south front door. The west opening has a vertical wooden board door.
 - b. Windows and shutters: The frames, sash, shutters and openings are original as of 1760. The windows on the south front number four and are eight-over-eight light double-hung wooden sash windows on the west side of the main section. There are also two two-over-two light double-hung wooden sash windows leading to the attic.
6. Roof:
 - a. Shape, covering: Gable roofs with composition shingle roof.
 - b. Cornice, eaves: The south side has the original 1727 plaster cove cornice and the other sides were copied from this. There is also a flat bottom pent eave on the south front with a centered, cantilevered pediment over the door.
 - c. Dormers: None in 1727 section; one gable roof dormer on rear (1760) wing.
- C. Description of Interior:
 1. Floor plans: The original 1727 section has one room with a stairway in the north west corner and two rooms on the second floor. The two-story rear wing has one room at each level.
 2. Stairways: A one-run stairway is located in the northeast corner of the main section; it is left-handed with a closed string and a baluster railing.
 3. Flooring: Original wood flooring in nearly all sections.

4. Wall and ceiling finish: Plaster; mostly all original as of 1760. The original poplar paneling has been replaced by plaster.
5. Doorways and doors: Original as of 1760. One doorway (from the 1727 section to the 1760 section on the second floor) was put in in 1946.
6. Hardware: Rosehead nails and simple wrought iron hinges.
7. Lighting: Modern electricity.
8. Heating: Large open fireplaces with stone hearths, as well as modern heating.

D. Site:

1. General setting and orientation: House faces south and is set well back from Goshen Road, in the middle of approximately $3\frac{1}{2}$ acres.
2. Enclosures: None.
3. Outbuildings: Spring house on neighboring property.
4. Walks, driveways etc.: The driveway from the road goes on the west side of the house.
5. Landscaping, gardens etc.: Well landscaped.

Prepared by Bart Anderson
Curator, Chester County
Historical Society
National Park Service
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